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TRAINING FOCUS FOR THE 1990s;
CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

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A Monograph
by
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ABSTRACT

TRAINING FOCUS FOR THE 1990s: CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS by
MAJ Harry E. Mornston, USA, 51 pages.

This monograph examines the conditions that exist during the execution of contingency operations (as opposed to the combat conditions on a mid to high-intensity battlefield) in order to derive a training focus for the future.

After reviewing the documents that establish power projection as a fundamental concept of the national military strategy and an anticipated form of combat for the armed forces, this monograph examines the Army and Joint doctrine that addresses contingency operations. The definitions, characteristics, and types of contingency operations that are described in the doctrinal publications on this critical subject illuminate the vast differences between the commonly held visions of mid to high-intensity warfare against a Soviet threat and combat in the post-Cold War era.

Examples and vignettes from Operation JUST CAUSE further demonstrate the nature of combat on the contingency battlefield. This analysis of a recent contingency operation serves as vehicle to allow leaders to identify the tasks and conditions on which units should focus their training to prepare themselves for future expeditionary combat. The process of deriving peacetime training requirements from potential wartime missions causes units to develop a battle focus and implement the principle "train as you fight."

The physical conditions of the battlefield, the degree of integration among heavy, light, and special operating forces, innovative task organizations, and restrictive rules concerning the use of force are identified as conditions that are likely to be present on contingency battlefields of the future. The monograph concludes that leaders must first determine the probable conditions under which they will fight and then focus their training activities on these conditions.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In a 1962 speech to the graduates of the United States Military Academy, President John F. Kennedy spoke of a different form of warfare created by the then changing geopolitical environment.

These are the kinds of challenges that will be before us in the next decade if freedom is to be saved, a whole new kind of strategy, a wholly new kind of force, and therefore a new and wholly different kind of military training.¹

President Kennedy was speaking of the emerging threat in Southeast Asia. He recognized this new threat was at the opposite end of the spectrum from the high intensity warfare that threatened nuclear Armageddon.

The change to the strategic environment and the resulting changes in the nature of conflict that Kennedy identified continued to accelerate through the coming decades. The President was evidently aware that the nature of wars that would involve the United States would be what some now refer to as low-intensity conflict (LIC). In 1989 when the probability of massive conflict with the Soviet Union decreased dramatically, the challenges that President Kennedy addressed in 1962 became even greater. Through five decades of the Cold War, the US military strategy relegated LIC to a subsidiary role because of the

pervasive threat of the Soviet Union - an enemy capable of destroying the United States with a single cataclysmic attack. However in the early 1990s, massive internal economic and political disarray swept through the Soviet Union. The net effect of the turmoil was a major change to the strategic environment as the Soviets lost their status as a world super power. As a result of the demise of the bipolar world, the United States adopted a new military strategy, one of force projection rather than forward deployment.

It is of great significance that President Kennedy, the Commander in Chief of the armed forces, recognized the relationship between a new military strategy and the need to train military forces to execute that strategy. The linkage that exists between the strategic context and the concept of operations for the employment of the military element of power was recognized by the President in 1962. Given the emergence of a new military strategy, there is good reason for leaders in the armed forces to reassess training precepts and methods. This monograph examines the training ramifications associated with the post-Cold War military strategy. Specifically, this study will determine if there exists a unique set of tasks and/or conditions for executing contingency operations that require US Army units to adjust their training focus.

The path from a broad national military strategy to a specific training focus for US Army units operating in support of the strategy is relatively direct; however, this path touches several diverse subjects. A general outline of this monograph is provided below.

Road Map

The monograph begins with a short description of the evolution of the national military strategy. Included in this discussion is a brief examination of the major differences between the pre- and post-Cold War strategies.

The next section summarizes the research of doctrinal and literary sources pertaining to power projection. Key definitions, descriptions, and characteristics of contingency operations are examined to derive training implications for this type of warfare.

Following this doctrinal overview is a brief discussion of the training doctrine that guides the US Army in its preparations for war. The principle of "train as you fight" is identified as a key concept as the Army realigns its training priorities from one particular theater and enemy to the ambiguous circumstances of the post-Cold war era.

This monograph then examines the experiences of the US in Operation JUST CAUSE in 1989. This analysis provides insight that may be translated into practical application for Army units training for their role in power projection. From this synthesis of the tasks and conditions that characterize contingencies, the monograph outlines a training focus to guide Army units preparing for war in a new and uncertain strategic setting.

II. NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY

Critical to this study is the full understanding of the changes to the military strategy. As alluded to by President Kennedy, a derivative of military strategy is a trained force that ultimately implements the strategy.

The demise of the Warsaw Pact and the ongoing political, economic, and military changes in the Soviet Union have led to the end of the Cold War and a radically changed strategic environment. The defense strategy that was developed and executed beginning with the end of World War II is now a "dinosaur" in the post Cold War era. The former military strategy was driven by a picture of future conflicts colored by the Soviet Union's massive armored forces, the European landscape, the possibility of nuclear exchange, and the United States commitment to support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The armed forces of

the United States, and the Army in particular, have trained for forty years focused on the European battlefield with huge forward deployed formations of seventy ton main battle tanks, sophisticated infantry fighting vehicles, self-propelled artillery, and the other components of massive, high-intensity warfare. This strategy led to a 45 year stand-off between coalitions guided by the world's two foremost military super powers. The collapse of one of these competitors has rendered the strategy of containment through forward deployment obsolete. ²

However, the end of the Cold War has not eliminated all of the threats that have potential for armed conflict. Mankind has not seen the end of war. Regional actors with increasing military, economic, and political power, not a monolithic Soviet Union, pose the most likely threats to US interests.³ It is probable, therefore, that we have seen a significant change in the nature of warfare. Major changes in the world political environment, such as those that occurred in Europe in late 1989 and the early 1990s, caused planners to develop new strategic concepts to protect the interests of the United States and visualize how future conflicts might arise and be waged.

The revised US defense strategy contains elements of continuity and change.⁴ The major change in the strategy is most clearly observed in the strategic concept of power projection in response to regional threats. Power

projection replaces the concept of forward deployment that countered the Soviet threat. Brigadier General Daniel Christman, the Army's former Director of Strategy, Plans and Policy calls power projection the hallmark of the new strategy and recognizes that "power projection is the concept that represents the principal departure from the old strategy." He continues, "it is also the most difficult to come to grips with." ⁵ The idea of using a US based strike force as opposed to relying primarily on forward deployed forces is a significant change and has serious ramifications for the military forces that must be prepared to execute the strategy. A revised training philosophy is needed to address the conditions and tasks created by a force projection strategy.

The armed forces of the United States are currently undergoing massive changes in response to the emerging strategic environment and reshaped fiscal attitudes. The Army that emerges will be reshaped and must modify its training programs to remain capable of performing its role in national defense. A defense strategy built around power projection requires a military with special characteristics and training. As a recent study for the US Army War College stated,

The quintessential quality of a military in this new scenario is its ability to project force quickly anywhere in the world to remove or diminish those threats. These activities are the domain of contingency operations . . . ⁶

III. DOCTRINE

A thorough understanding of contingency operations is required before the issue of the proper training for Army tactical units can be addressed. US Army and Joint doctrine, complemented by commentary from military professionals who have studied contingency operations in great detail, provide some insight into the nature of contingency operations.

Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations, defines contingency operations as

Military actions requiring rapid deployment to perform military tasks in support of national policy. Such operations are normally undertaken when vital national interests are at stake and other forms of influence have been exhausted or need to be supplemented by either a show of force or direct military action.

This definition of contingency operations is taken from the keystone to the Army's warfighting doctrine; however, the treatment of contingency operations in Army (and Joint) doctrine is rather shallow.⁸ Given the absence of definitive doctrine on the subject, some will find the proposition of deriving training programs for contingency forces somewhat speculative. The pending publication of AirLand Operations in late 1992, however, makes it

imperative that the Army begin to reassess its training programs.

A review of past wars involving the United States suggests that the American military has been consistently unprepared to fight its first battles.⁹ The 1992 version of FM 100-5 may place contingency operations at the center of the doctrine. According to leaders at the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), "the author's intent is to force the Army to think primarily in force projection terms." Of even greater importance is the suggestion that "AirLand Operations treats the entire Army as a contingency force. Previous doctrine assumed most of the Army's combat units, except for XVIII Airborne Corps, already would be in place when a crisis arose."¹⁰

The Strike Operations Handbook, published in March 1990, specifically addresses contingency operations. This reference provides general information on all contingency operations and detailed information on strikes, raids, and other direct military actions. The Strike Operations Handbook amplifies the definition offered in FM 100-5 by listing nine characteristics of contingency operations.¹¹

- US interests are at stake
- Generated by a crisis
- Time sensitive
- Political pressure for a quick, clear victory
- Uncertainty of the situation on the ground

- Requires tailored and packaged forces
- Involve joint and combined operations
- Political situation may impose a degree of centralized control
- Forces used will be constrained by the availability of sea and airlift

These characteristics begin to establish a vision of contingency operations. This visualization can be used as a point of departure for developing conditions and tasks that are relevant to training for contingency operations.

The definition of contingency operations in the Strike Operations Handbook is "politically sensitive military actions requiring rapid deployment of military forces in support of national policy normally undertaken in conditions short of war."(emphasis added)¹²

The qualifier "in conditions short of war" is important because it is necessary to understand where contingency operations fall within the spectrum of military operations as defined by current doctrine. FM 100-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict, lists four broad categories of operations. In addition to insurgency/counterinsurgency, peacekeeping operations, and combatting terrorism, peacetime contingency operations are considered to be a category of low-intensity conflict. Believing that contingency operations will occur only at low intensity levels could be a mistake. Joint Pub 3-0,

Doctrine for Unified and Joint Operations states, "LIC involves operations that occur across the entire operational continuum." ¹³

There are a multitude of credible military powers throughout the world. "Each year the mechanisms of war are becoming more destructive, more accurate, more numerous, more transportable, and more available."¹⁴ The pre-1990 Iraqi Army is a good example of the size and capabilities of armies that are emerging around the world. In future crises the US may project combat power into theaters of operations where an enemy fields a significant number of lethal systems such as armor and mechanized forces, long range artillery, precision guided munitions, or even nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. Because the possibility exists for forces to be projected into such "mid-intensity" scenarios, the Army must not neglect this contingency.

Although many potential adversaries of the US are caught in the global trend of increasingly sophisticated and capable armed forces, conflicts of lower intensity are the more probable form of warfare. Contingencies can occur at any point on the operational continuum, but it is more likely that this form of warfare will follow the trend away from grand crusades replete with large opposing coalitions, action at the operational level, and blitzkrieg tactics of deep, slashing armor penetrations.

The types of contingency operations described in the Strike Operations Handbook further demonstrate that contingencies do not resemble the large scale operations and campaigns that the Army anticipated and trained for for 45 years. The nine types of contingency operations are:¹⁵

- show of force and demonstrations
- non combatant evacuation operations (NEO)
- rescue and recovery operations
- strikes and raids
- peacemaking
- unconventional warfare
- disaster relief
- security assistance surges
- support to US civil authorities

The above list spans a diverse spectrum of operations. The training required to prepare units to execute these operations could be staggering. Colonel Paul Tiberi summarized the vast diversity of contingencies

. . . a contingency force must be sufficiently versatile to adapt both to mission requirements and to the dictates of the operational environment. The objective area may be defended, or it may be benign; the enemy might be mobile and armored, or a light paramilitary force; the terrain could resemble the steep jungles of Central America, or the wide-open desert of the Middle East. Likewise, the mission could range from a simple show of force (Honduras, 1988), to an urgent non combatant evacuation operation (Liberia, September 1990), to a major war

(Arabian Peninsula, August 1990). Moreover, early arriving units may be required to fight upon arrival at the same time reinforcing units are deploying.¹⁶

Other authors choose the word "expeditions" to describe the use of the military in power projection. Major Dan Bolger describes expeditionary combat as

the deployment of a small military force into a hostile area to accomplish certain definite objectives. Expeditions are temporary in nature and normally of brief duration. Often they respond to a unique, urgent threat. These operations fall outside the usual regimen of American defense missions, hence the military sometimes characterizes them as "contingencies." . . . With little time available and in an unexpected situation, expeditionary forces face particular challenges in intelligence analysis, communications, and coordination.¹⁷

Bolger's description, only slightly different from doctrinal definitions of contingency operations, reveals other complexities that must be addressed in training if the Army (and other services) is to be successful in performing these operations. This description addresses contingency operations that are not adequately covered in doctrinal sources. The US interventions in the Dominican Republic in 1965, Grenada in 1983, and Panama in 1989 do not fit one of the types of contingency operations specified in the Strike Operations Handbook, but are better described by Bolger.

Conventional Army units may be called on to participate in any of the nine types of contingency operations (or

those described by Major Bolger) listed previously. It is also possible that during one campaign or expedition several of the types of contingency operations previously mentioned could be executed simultaneously or sequentially. Thus, a significant training challenge exists not only in preparing units for this form of warfare, but also to transition rapidly from one type of contingency operation to another--each with different demands on soldiers and units. However, the preponderance of the Army will be committed most often in show of force/demonstrations and the expeditionary combat described by Bolger. Other types of contingency operations such as NEO, strikes/raids, rescues, unconventional warfare, and security assistance may require the deployment of conventional units, although Special Operating Forces will be the leading actors in such operations.

Of the nine types of contingency operations identified in the Strike Operations Handbook, this monograph focuses on the use of conventional Army forces in contingency operations that involve power projection for the purpose of protecting US interests through combat. Expeditionary combat, the form of warfare central to the new strategy, represents a vast departure from the vision of large-scale, high intensity warfare that drove training programs for 45 years.

The preceding doctrinal and expository descriptions of contingency operations provide a fundamental understanding of this type of military action. Training implications begin to emerge simply by examining the basics of contingency operations.

IV. TRAINING

The Army training mission is to prepare soldiers, leaders, and units to deploy, fight, and win in combat at any intensity level, anywhere, anytime.¹⁸ To accomplish this mission the Army trains under tough, realistic, demanding conditions in order to maintain its readiness and meet its commitments. If it is to be successful, Army training must also focus on each unit's potential wartime missions. The process of deriving peacetime training requirements from wartime missions is referred to as "battle focus." The essence of battle focus is an examination of everything a unit could be expected to do (based on war plans, mission statements, and guidance from higher headquarters) and the linkage of those tasks to its combat mission.

Thus, effective Army training must be focused on the tasks and performed under the conditions that a unit anticipates facing on the contingency battlefield. Battle-focused training under combat conditions is a

formula for success and supports the principle, "train as you fight."¹⁹ Athletic coaches have realized for years that demanding practice sessions, focused on a deliberately developed game plan, conducted under game conditions, are critical for victory on the fields of friendly strife.

The underlying premise is that a unit operates at a disadvantage when it is forced to execute a task in combat that it has not trained for under warlike conditions in peacetime. Mission accomplishment and lives are at stake when a unit that is engaged in combat suddenly determines that its training program has been inadequate.

For 45 years the Army has directed the majority of its training efforts toward being prepared to fight against the Soviet Union in a European environment. These efforts have been tremendously successful. Many of these training techniques and exercises that the Army has developed and refined can also be applied to contingency warfare. However, the conditions on the contingency battlefield may be significantly different from the mid to high-intensity battlefield. The Army must strive not only to maintain current levels of training readiness, but must explore new and innovative ideas to enhance its readiness in the contingency arena.

As stated in FM 25-100, Training the Force, "we train the way we intend to fight because our historical experiences show the direct correlation between realistic

training and success on the battlefield." ²⁰ A cogent example of a unit being unprepared to react on short notice to an unforeseen crisis is the tragic story of Task Force Smith. At the beginning of the Korean conflict in July 1950 a small, ill-equipped and poorly trained force deployed from Japan to South Korea to fight the advancing North Korean Army. This force was quickly overrun and soundly defeated.²¹ "No More Task Force Smiths" has been invoked by the Army Chief of Staff, General Gordon R. Sullivan, as the theme that emphasizes the importance of training.²² Contingency operations are not a new task for the US Army. Recent history provides a prism to study this form of warfare and focus our training efforts.

V. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The US military has a long history of responding to crises on short notice. The earliest example in the long tradition of expeditionary combat occurred between 1803-1805 when the Navy and Marine Corps conducted a series of punitive amphibious raids against the Barbary Pirates.²³ Almost 200 years later in 1986, the US returned to Northern Africa to punish Libya's Moammar Gadhafi. In fact, the US military establishment has been involved in no less than eleven expeditions or

contingencies since the withdrawal of US forces from the Vietnam conflict in 1975.²⁴

Several of these actions involved projection of a significant amount of Army forces and resulted in ground operations ranging from shows of force to major combat in widely different environments. A thorough study of these operations provides valuable insight into the activities that comprise contingency operations. Granted, each expedition, perhaps more than any other form of war, was unique. Further, relying on past events to predict the future is risky to say the least. We cannot learn immutable lessons from the past. Apparently, some analysts have come to realize that one must be cautious when attempting to use previous conflicts as a model for the future. Currently, there are as many authors cautioning against drawing too many conclusions from Operation Desert Storm as there are championing this great victory and publishing volumes of glowing after action reports.²⁵ Throughout history there have been predictions about how wars would be fought in the future. Many of these forecasts have been highly inaccurate.

Facts are too contradictory, too specialized, and too subject to misinterpretation to substantiate unequivocal conclusions. Certain generalized conclusions, however, can be supported.²⁶

Realizing that the use of historical case studies is not a perfect solution, this study will examine

contemporary contingency operations to obtain some insight into this form of combat while attempting to avoid the misuse of history Clausewitz cautioned against.²⁷

Studying the actions required of units that have executed contingencies in the immediate past provides the best point of departure for deriving the training focus required of others that will be called in the future. The US intervention in Panama in 1989 is one such operation.

Operation JUST CAUSE

On 20 December 1989 the US armed forces staged an attack into Panama that was the largest US combat operation since the conclusion of the Vietnam conflict. 9500 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines deployed to join 13,000 combatants already poised in Panama (either permanently or temporarily stationed) in response to deteriorating relations and a series of incidents that began in 1987.

Operation JUST CAUSE is an excellent contingency operation to examine for several reasons: (1) Executed in 1989, this operation implemented the revisions dictated by the 1986 Department of Defense Reorganization Act (Goldwater-Nichols) and the newest version of the Army's AirLand Battle doctrine. (2) With participation from and genuine cooperation between each of the services this was a

true "joint" operation. (3) The forces that deployed represent the entire spectrum of Army units--heavy, light, special operating forces, active and reserve component, and combat, combat support, and combat service support. These three factors combine to create an opportunity to examine training ramifications in a contingency operation for the entire Army force structure in a joint environment, and as required by legislative stipulations and current Army doctrine.

Conversely, JUST CAUSE was executed under other conditions that will not necessarily be replicated in the future: (1) An infrastructure that was reasonably well developed. (2) A thorough knowledge of the area of operations based on decades of presence. (3) A treaty guaranteeing access to and movement within the country, thus permitting the prepositioning of forces and (4) a situation that developed over a two year period allowing detailed planning to occur in advance.

Although overshadowed by Operation DESERT SHIELD/STORM, JUST CAUSE is heralded as a great success by military and civilian leaders. The armed forces of the United States working together focused decisive combat power to accomplish military missions and political objectives. The operation is a good example of a "coup de main." Numerous strikes, thoroughly planned and vigorously executed,

overwhelmed the Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF) and ensured the success of the operation.

A number of battlefield activities that were somewhat different from the traditional view of ground combat occurred during JUST CAUSE. Studying these activities illustrates tasks or conditions that may be important in future contingency operations and therefore should be part of the training for units that are subject to be committed to expeditionary combat.

VI. ANALYSIS

Conditions

The traditional battlefield conditions that the Army trained under are framed by the now unlikely possibility of direct combat against the Soviet Union. This monograph contrasts the conditions on the European battlefield with the circumstances of recent contingency operations. A significantly changed battlefield environment and revised concepts concerning force integration, task organizations, and rules of engagement will be present in future contingency operations. Each of these issues is analyzed in subsequent sections to determine potential training implications for units that may execute contingency operations.

The Battlefield Environment

The location, terrain, climate, and existing infrastructure of future contingency battlefields are unknown. Threats to US interests that may require the application of the military element of power can arise virtually anywhere in the world. On the other hand, the European battlefield has been meticulously studied, analyzed, plotted, and prepared by terrain experts and commanders. The European landscape has fostered the vision of massive armored formations, augmented by a smaller number of light and special forces, ranging from Rotterdam to the Ukraine. Although Europe is heavily urbanized, the Army has prepared for battle in the rural countryside and smaller villages of Germany. Because military operations on urban terrain (MOUT) tend to consume massive quantities of manpower without producing a clear cut victory, city fighting is avoided whenever possible. In the traditional view, decisive combat occurs where massed armies can clash using the firepower, mobility, and protection of their primary force. Most leaders realize that MOUT cannot be avoided entirely, but they routinely dedicate most of their resources to preparing for a "field and stream" war.

A derivative of urban combat is civilian noncombatants. The number of refugees on the European battlefield is projected to be immense. But, tactical

units train primarily in sterile force on force environments at one of the combat training centers. Even at the Joint Readiness Training Center, where the scenario is oriented toward combat at the lower end of the spectrum, mission accomplishment is seldom impeded by anything other than the enemy force.

Contingency operations may be fought in an area vastly different from a battlefield that is secluded from large cities and uncluttered by noncombatants. Several of the expeditions involving ground combat since 1975 have been fought in predominantly urban terrain. Although the rescue force never progressed to Teheran, the decisive action in the 1979 Iran hostage rescue attempt would have involved urban combat. Similarly, the Grenada operation of 1983, the Marine Corps involvement in Beirut, and the NEO operation in Liberia in 1990 were not "field" operations.

Operation JUST CAUSE surpasses the degree of MOUT operations experienced even in the Dominican Republic in 1965. Panama City, the site of much of the fighting during JUST CAUSE, is a sprawling urban area with a population of 600,000.²⁸ The majority of the military objectives consisted of large military-civilian airports, military headquarters, garrisons, barracks and facilities such as the Bridge of the Americas and critical sites on the Panama Canal. Additionally, some sectors of Panama City and Colon had to be searched building by building. A city block

often included fifty buildings, some of which were modern skyscrapers.

Several officers have commented on their expectations of operating in an urban environment, and the realities they faced in Panama.²⁹ An after action review noted that because of the presence of civilians and the immensity of the city, standard building-clearing techniques--those trained by most Army units--were not used.³⁰ One officer, reflecting on his experiences in Panama stated,

I am not convinced that our current MOUT training is preparing us for the kind of city fighting we may do in the future. The training I had received both in a unit and later at CGSC at Fort Leavenworth focused on a Stalingrad-type city fight.³¹

But by the time the Germans and the Russians fought through Stalingrad, it was virtually deserted. There were no rules concerning civilians or collateral damage.

There were also many revelations at the small-unit level. The effects of city lights on night vision devices, the impact of civilian traffic on local security, the difficulties in FM communication caused by high rise buildings, and weapon effects in general had not been addressed in training exercises.³² Such shortcomings in fundamental tactical and technical proficiency limit the ability of a leader to properly employ and synchronize the assets of his unit.

Synchronization, one of the tenets of AirLand Battle doctrine, addresses "the arrangement of battlefield

activities in time, space, and purpose to produce maximum relative combat power at the decisive point."³³ In the traditional sense, commanders coordinate direct and indirect fires, artillery delivered minefields, close air support sorties, attack helicopter missions, and many other assets to destroy the enemy force. In Panama, the arrangement of battlefield activities related to cordoning off a section of the city with roadblocks, using loud speaker teams to attempt to persuade the enemy force to surrender, conducting a show of force by aggressively moving Sheridan tanks into the area, positioning surveillance helicopters, and finally committing infantrymen to clear the buildings.

The entire process was complicated by the presence of noncombatants, especially the numbers that flooded the streets in Panama. Some units had to divert significant amounts of combat power to control and safeguard the local population. A number of units have determined that their handling of the civilian population was not only in accordance with strategic directives to minimize casualties, but directly contributed to their tactical successes as well. One soldier observed, "most of the people in our AO were, if not pro American, at least neutral. It was therefore important that we keep casualties and damage to civilian property to a minimum."³⁴ Thus, individual soldiers can have an impact

on the success or failure of the unit's mission simply by the manner in which they treat civilians.

The battle in Panama was not fought in the jungle. If it had been, most units would have been reasonably prepared. Instead, the battle was fought building to building, taking great care to minimize damage and protect the Panamanian people. These constraints and conditions presented an unforeseen, and largely untrained for dynamic on the battlefield. As a result of the unanticipated conditions in Panama, the attempts to limit unnecessary damage were not completely successful.³⁵

Light/Heavy/Special Operating Forces Integration

Army units that participated in operation JUST CAUSE spanned the force structure. Mechanized units from the 5th Infantry Division, light units from the 7th Infantry Division, airborne battalions and light armor units from the 82d Airborne Division and XVIII Airborne Corps, and a variety of special operating forces worked together to destroy the Panamanian Defense Force (PDF) that kept Manuel Noreiga, the self-proclaimed leader of Panama, in power. Each of these forces have specific capabilities and limitations. Through detailed planning these forces were organized and employed to exploit their strengths and mitigate each others weaknesses. The result was a complex

series of overwhelming strikes employing a mix of forces at widely dispersed targets that quickly disarmed the PDF.³⁶

Employing light and heavy forces together is not unique to contingency operations. Unlike the central European battlefield that was dominated by heavy forces, contingency operations will require predominantly light forces that are designed for rapid deployment on strategic airlift assets. The discussion of forces available for contingency operations in FM 100-5 states, "Light forces can be deployed quickly and are easiest to support. When adequate to the threat, they are the preferred Army force."³⁷

However, contingency operations will often require at least a small amount of armored or other heavy forces. The requirement for heavy forces is driven by the phenomenon of global arming and other METT-T considerations. The presence of heavy forces, even in situations that are thought of as traditional light infantry or special forces missions, can be a tremendous combat multiplier.

Additionally, planners have recognized that special operating forces would be employed in the same theater with conventional forces. The relationship between SOF and conventional forces however, was thought to be distinct in terms of mission and distant in terms of location on the battlefield. The efforts to integrate the training of SOF and conventional forces have been directed at the Joint

Task Force (JTF) staff, not the tactical units in the field.

Operation JUST CAUSE provides an opportunity to study how light, heavy, and SOF units may be required to work in a total integrated effort, in unusual task organizations, to accomplish a variety of tasks that are peculiar to contingency operations. Many leaders have concluded that the combined arms force is as important to contingency operations as it has been in other scenarios.

Although some actions in JUST CAUSE were executed in isolation and great secrecy by special operators in accordance with their unique skills, other actions, somewhat unusual to traditional visions of combat, included SOF and conventional forces working closely together. One example of SOF-conventional force integration involved a Special Forces (SF) company reinforced and supported by an airborne infantry battalion configured to execute air assault operations. This organization worked to disarm and occupy PDF garrisons that were not attacked during the initial assault. A SF detachment with its linguists and attached PSYOPS and civil affairs personnel would meet with the PDF garrison commander to discuss the terms of the garrison's surrender. As the meeting was taking place additional combat assets (UH-60s laden with paratroopers ready to add their weight to any hostilities that occurred) were positioned close to the garrison and in plain view of

the PDF commander. The arrival of an AC-130 gunship further convinced the PDF that the only alternative was to surrender. After the SF company accepted the surrender and began the initial work to clear the compound, elements of the conventional force landed to fully occupy the compound while the SF element moved to another location to repeat the process.³⁸ SF units provided the specialty skills (language specialists, regional expertise, civil affairs and psychological warfare attachments) while conventional units provided security and additional combat power to reinforce the Special Forces.

Although this example is unusual, it demonstrates that SOF and conventional forces may actually work together in a task organization with a command relationship established at battalion or brigade level. Another example from Operation JUST CAUSE involved a Sheridan section being placed under the operational control (OPCON) of 1-75 Rangers in the vicinity of Tocumen airfield.³⁹

In addition to the instances of special operating and conventional forces working together during JUST CAUSE, other examples of close integration between these forces are noteworthy. In the 1983 URGENT FURY operation, a Navy special operation Sea-Air-Land (SEAL) detachment, during the execution of a rescue mission, was "pinned down" by Grenadian forces using Soviet BTR 60 armored personnel carriers. The SEALs lacked the firepower to complete their

mission or extricate themselves without assistance from conventional attack helicopters and ground units. The special operators completed this mission successfully, but not without a big assist from their conventional brethren.⁴⁰

Special and conventional forces will work in concert in the opening phases of future contingency operations when US forces often seize an airfield. The seizure of an airfield and subsequent expansion of the airhead provide a lodgement which can be used by follow-on forces arriving in the area of operations. Airfield seizure is a high risk, forced entry operation that will often require the skills, equipment, and capabilities of both special and conventional forces to accomplish the mission.

The preceding examples illustrate several of the situations in which conventional and special forces have the potential to be integrated during contingency operations. Thus, in contingency operations, the situation will not necessarily involve SOF units executing only deep, independent, strategic operations that are completely transparent to other units on the battlefield. It is very likely that future contingency operations may require integration of SOF and conventional forces in new and unusual ways, at levels far below corps, theater army, or JTF levels.

The integration of heavy and light forces was even more common during Operation JUST CAUSE. Although the number of "heavy" units was not great, the presence of M113s, Sheridans, and Marine light armored vehicles (LAV) played a major role in several engagements. Light units, often reinforced with mechanized or armored vehicles, worked in concert on a variety of operations. Heavy units crashed through enemy roadblocks, fired large caliber ammunition to create breaches in walls and obstacles, provided overwatch for assault elements, accompanied dismounted forces on patrol, escorted convoys, performed security tasks at key installations, and were part of the force that surrounded the Vatican embassy. The fire power, protection, and mobility of the armored vehicles added to the capabilities of the infantry units was an effective combination.

For most of the operation the heavy units were organized under a mechanized infantry battalion headquarters but "parceled out" to many different light units in support of their operations. The situation in Panama allowed the commander of Task Force GATOR to employ armored and mechanized vehicles at section level at many locations simultaneously instead of in platoon, company or larger size units as is described in current doctrine. There were many instances where single vehicles performed escort tasks for dismounted patrols or wheeled vehicle convoys.

Correct application of the principle of mass in any situation is often decisive in combat. Commanders at all levels seek to concentrate combat power at the decisive place and time. In mid-high intensity combat, mass is achieved through large armored formations that maximize the shock action of tanks and other armored vehicles.

Employing armored units in small packages at separate locations on the battlefield is not usually a prescription for mass. However, experiences at the Joint Readiness Training Center, the British operation in the Falkland Islands in 1982, and the preceding example from JUST CAUSE all suggest that small packages of armored vehicles are of great importance in contingency operations.

Contingency operations, with tight deployability constraints on the number of heavy units that can be transported on scarce lift assets, and METT-T conditions that are vastly different from traditional armored warfare, may require armored forces to be used in much smaller densities. The use of heavy units at section and platoon level is also likely to occur in environs other than the jungles and cities of Panama.

It is not difficult to envision a scenario that requires a force list that includes an assault element consisting of a light infantry brigade that has operational control of a mechanized infantry team equipped with Bradley Fighting Vehicles and M-1 tanks. As suggested by the US

Army Armor School, "Often a small number of armored vehicles can turn the tide of battle in the early parts of engagement. A tank platoon airlanded on day 1 may be more critical than an armored division landed on day 30."⁴¹

Task Organization

The preceding discussion of the integration of forces to achieve success in tactical situations leads directly to the issue of organizing these forces. Contingency operations will require tailored and packaged forces that are capable of rapid deployment. Task organizing refers to the process of allocating forces by determining and assigning command and/or support relationships within a unit. Although the same logic may apply, the task organization of a contingency force will probably not resemble the forces that are organized for battle in central Europe. Task organizations are developed based on deductions resulting from the estimate of the situation. The task organization should serve as a combat multiplier by offsetting limitations and maximizing the potential of all forces available, exploiting enemy vulnerabilities, making best use of terrain, and providing weight to the main effort.

Because lift constraints will ensure that the number and type of forces will be limited, the force package must

be carefully considered. The forces deployed, especially those in the first echelons, may be outnumbered by the enemy. By including a "slice" of engineers, air defenders, artillery units, aviation assets, electronic warfare specialists, military policemen, and other support and service support organizations, the capabilities of the deployed force can be increased disproportionately to the amount of precious cargo space consumed. Because of their enhancing effect, these combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) forces are often referred to as combat multipliers.

In any scenario, CS and CSS forces that are provided to a maneuver commander in a command or support relationship, perform at their best if the units have trained together. The large number of vastly different types of support units, the increasingly technical nature of the equipment, and in general, a lack of familiarity with the capabilities, limitations, and employment considerations of the supporting arms make the peacetime training requirement even more critical.

To further complicate the issue, in contingency operations, units will task organize at a much lower level. The burden of employing sophisticated, technical, and critical assets on the battlefield will be on leaders with less experience. The platoon leaders and company commanders who receive assets to augment their units will

not receive the degree of assistance from the supporting unit's staff that is usually available when larger organizations are cross attached.

The task organization peculiarities that can occur during contingency operations were vividly demonstrated in Operation JUST CAUSE and several other operations that preceded the direct combat operation. The task organization of the heavy force was very fluid and demonstrated the flexibility of mobile, armor and mechanized units in contingency operations. 4th Battalion, 6th Infantry from the 5th Infantry Division at Fort Polk, Louisiana, designated Task Force GATOR, formed the base of the heavy units in Panama. For most of the operation, Task Force GATOR consisted of two mechanized infantry companies equipped with M113s, an airborne infantry company from 1-508 Infantry of the 193d Brigade stationed in Panama, and Team Armor, consisting of one platoon of Sheridans and one platoon of USMC LAV 25s. Such an organization is a vast departure from a standard infantry battalion, but demonstrates the exigencies of contingency operations.

An even more unusual example occurred in Panama several months before Operation JUST CAUSE was executed. In a show of force operation that involved projection of a very limited force into Panama, the political restraints on the number and type of units deployed produced a "maneuver" unit that was organized around a field artillery battalion

headquarters. The forces subordinate to this organization were an infantry company, a military police company, and a signal platoon.⁴² Although this organization was well outside convention, it was apparently a feasible solution to an unusual situation.

The operations officer, after receiving guidance from his commander, usually conducts the detailed planning involved in developing the task organization. One operations officer who was involved in JUST CAUSE noted the circumstances surrounding how he employed the engineers that were supporting his battalion,

I found that we had to break the engineer units into smaller elements than we normally did in training. Doctrine calls for engineers to be committed as a platoon, or no smaller than a squad, but in actual operations we often had to send a demolition team or even a single engineer to advise an infantry platoon how to build obstacles.⁴³

The challenge of determining the optimal task organization in a given situation is not only difficult, it may affect the outcome of the operation. Contingency operations require organizations that are different from those to which units have become accustomed in the past. Effective training for contingency operations that anticipates the conditions on the battlefield will allow leaders to determine how and when to combine units to achieve the desired effect and train subordinate leaders in the intricacies of employing supporting arms.

Rules of Engagement

Because contingency operations are a category of low-intensity conflict, commanders need to consider and apply, in accordance with the situation, the doctrinal concepts of LIC. These concepts include the "Low-intensity Conflict Imperatives" described in Joint Pub 3-07, Doctrine for Joint Operations in Low Intensity Conflict.⁴⁴ One of these imperatives is the restricted use of force.

The restricted use of force is the judicious, prudent selection and employment of forces and weapons most suitable to the mission.⁴⁵ The restricted use of force is operationalized through rules of engagement (ROE) that are published and disseminated through the chain of command.

The Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms defines rules of engagement as, "directives issued by military commanders which specify the circumstances and limitations under which US forces will initiate and/or continue engagement with other forces encountered."⁴⁶ The rules of engagement for LIC in general, and during contingency operations in particular, will usually be more restrictive, more detailed, and more subject to political scrutiny than during other types of conflict. Constraints imposed by higher headquarters on weaponry, tactics, and level of violence are a departure

from the scenario of massive combat against the Warsaw Pact. Tactical training and gunnery qualification that combat units conduct in preparation for combat do not usually require a ROE decision by tank commanders, gunners of anti-tank weapons, or leaders before engaging a Soviet T72 tank. The use of the entire spectrum of lethal weapons from attack helicopters to massive volleys of devastating artillery munitions and hyper-velocity tank rounds is not only taken for granted, it is an activity critical to success in most training exercises. The Army trains at great length to synchronize the destructive effect of these weapons. Training does not usually include having to consult a lengthy list of rules of engagement to decide in the heat of (simulated) battle whether or not the enemy is exhibiting hostile intent and can therefore be engaged.

The guidance for the application of force in a general war (which has been much of the focus in the past) is the law of war--that part of international law that regulates the conduct of armed hostilities. The Army provides training at many levels on the law of war, but usually does not address the even more restrictive rules that are imposed during contingency operations.

ROE in a contingency operation are especially important because excessive violence can adversely affect the attainment of long-term and short-term goals. During contingency operations, ROE demand a disproportionate

amount of effort to develop, publish, disseminate, rehearse and otherwise manage.

During Operation JUST CAUSE the rules of engagement were the source of great concern and the cause of significant frustration among both soldiers and leaders. The ROE were published in JTF SOUTH OPLAN 90-2 and modified frequently.⁴⁷ Despite the efforts of planners and commanders at all levels taking great care to state the rules in clear, unequivocal terms, there was nonetheless great concern on the battlefield about interpreting and applying the ROE.

One leader noted, "By our last two weeks in Panama, [the ROE] changed almost daily, and we continuously stressed the current rules. The fastest way to get into trouble was to violate one of them."⁴⁸ Another officer involved in the operation described his experiences as follows.

Behavior deemed meritorious under one set of rules could be construed as unacceptable under another set. It's not difficult to understand how a soldier can become confused when he is praised for an act in one instance but is then reprimanded for a similar act in another. This is especially true in an environment where hesitation or a lapse in judgement could very well kill you or your fellow soldiers. The result was often frustration, tension, and ambivalence that further complicated an already confusing state of affairs."⁴⁹

A final example concerning the extreme difficulty in applying the ROE in Panama is demonstrated in the

observations of a brigade commander. This officer noted with concern that the ROE changed not only with respect to time, but also by location. At two check points within several blocks of each other the ROE were being applied differently.⁵⁰ This same commander noted on a previous operation in Panama involving similarly restrictive ROE that he had come to rely more on his Staff Judge Advocate than his operations officer.⁵¹

VII. IMPLICATIONS

The success of Operation JUST CAUSE can be attributed to many factors. The resolve of policy makers who made the decision to employ the military element of power, the stability and guidance from the highest echelons of the military chain of command, a detailed, thoroughly prepared plan, the leadership of tactical commanders on the ground, the abilities of the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines of the United States and the ineptitude of the PDF all contributed to the military success of the operation.

A properly focused training program that adequately prepared units for the nature of the combat they encountered is not part of the equation of the JUST CAUSE success. Upon his return to Fort Ord, California, an infantry battalion S3 stated, "I breathed a sigh of relief that the enemy had been less prepared for combat than we

had been."⁵² There are many other instances where soldiers and their leaders recognized that they were in a combat situation that had not been adequately addressed in their training. An infantry company executive officer from the 82d Airborne Division has vividly described training shortcomings in MOUT operations, adjusting to ROE changes, and post-conflict resolution activities.⁵³

Granted, the units that were deployed and fought in Panama were superbly led and performed admirably. No one should question the excellence demonstrated in the decentralized execution of a complex plan by our soldiers. The tough, demanding training, battle drills, live fire exercises, and leader development programs paid huge dividends in soldier discipline, unit cohesion, and proficiency in individual and small unit tactics. But it was the second order effect, the flexibility to adapt to what Dr Lawrence Yates refers to as "the twilight zone,"⁵⁴ when the Army found itself in conflict in unfamiliar circumstances, that resulted in the tactical victory in Panama.

Certainly we should not rely on less than fully prepared soldiers and units in a politically sensitive combat zone with lives and national interests at stake. In this era of force projection, the Army must provide training for its tactical units that prepares them for the

combat conditions and activities that are common to contingency operations.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

In the world of the soldier assigned to a unit with contingency missions, the frequent no-notice alerts, long deployments, and constant uneasiness about the "real thing," make for a less than comfortable existence. The soldier's confidence in himself and his unit is most affected by his level of training and readiness to execute his mission.

Contingency operations, as the center piece of the US military strategy, represent a new dynamic of combat. The type of conflict that the leaders of this country will commit the US armed forces to is substantially different from the general war, high-intensity scenario that the Army has focused on in the past. The basic combat tasks (move, attack, defend) may be much the same. The time tested principles of war are still applicable. The tenets and imperatives of our warfighting doctrine will continue to guide activities at the tactical and operational level.

The change that accompanies military operations conducted to support a strategy of power projection--particularly expeditionary combat--is in the conditions. The battlefield's physical characteristics may

be substantially different. Army units will encounter situations that require a greater degree of integration, in different organizations, under vastly different rules.

In some respects, the traditional concepts are present with a slightly different twist, or are applied at a new level or to a greater (or lesser) degree. Taken individually, these new conditions are not a radical departure from the conditions the Army has trained under for forty years. However, the cumulative effect of these and other dynamics that have not been mentioned in this monograph, strongly suggest a considerable change to the nature of combat.

After briefly discussing and establishing the strategic, doctrinal, training, and historic underpinnings of contingency operations, this monograph identified several conditions that may characterize future expeditions. The battlefield environment, force mix, task organization, and rules of engagement issues examined in this monograph are not the only conditions that will characterize expeditionary combat. Further study may determine that there are other conditions that will exist. In any case, the Army must deduce the conditions of future combat so that its combat units can properly prepare themselves for the next time they are called.

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¹John F. Kennedy, "The Responsibility to Deter War as Well as to Fight It," Speech delivered at the commencement, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY, June 6, 1962. Printed in Vital Speeches of the Day 18 (July 1, 1962): 546-548.

²Dick Cheney, "A New Defense Strategy for Changing Times," Defense 91 (March/April 1991): 3. Also Robert J. Art, "A Defensible Defense: America's Grand Strategy After the Cold War," International Security 15 (Spring 1991): 5.

³Secretary of Defense. Report of the Secretary of Defense to the President and the Congress. (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, January 1991), v.

⁴US President. National Security Strategy of the United States. (Washington DC: The White House, August 1991), 25.

⁵Daniel W. Christman, "Desert Shield/Storm: A Case Study of the Emerging National Military Strategy," Remarks delivered at the Triangle University Security Seminar, Durham, North Carolina, 4 April 1991.

⁶Paul Tiberi, Robert Moberly, and John Murphy, "Force Projection: Seeds for a New Doctrine," US Army War College Study Project, 1 May 1991.

⁷US Army, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington: Department of the Army, 1986), 169.

⁸Paul Tiberi et al., 122.

⁹John Shy, "First Battles in Retrospect," America's First Battles, ed. Charles E. Heller and William A. Stoft, Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 329. In this essay Shy considers that of the ten first battles described in this book, five were clear defeats and four of the remaining five battles were so costly that it is difficult to call them victories.

¹⁰Sean D. Naylor, "Built for Speed," Army Times 8 (23 September 1991): 24.

¹¹US Army, Strike Operations Handbook (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combined Arms Command, 1990) 1-1.

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¹² Ibid.

¹³ Joint Pub 3-0 p I-7. Operational continuum is described in JCS Pub 3-3, Doctrine for Unified and Joint Operations. Within a theater, operations can occur in response to a wide range of conditions and threats. These operations are conducted within a continuum consisting of three general states: peacetime competition, conflict, and war. The operational continuum is intended to assist in the articulation of the strategic within a theater. In actual circumstances there may be no precise distinction where a particular state ends and another begins.

¹⁴ The Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, Supporting US Strategy for Third World Conflict (Washington: The Commission on Integrated Long Term-Strategy, June 1988), 11.

¹⁵ Strike Operations Handbook, 1-1.

¹⁶ Paul Tiberi et al., 59.

¹⁷ Daniel P. Bolger, Americans at War 1975-1986, An Era of Violent Peace (Novato, Ca: Presidio Press, 1988), 12.

¹⁸ US Army, FM 25-100, Training the Force (Washington: Department of the Army, November 1988), 1-1.

¹⁹ FM 25-100, 1-3.

²⁰ Ibid., 1-1.

²¹ Roy K. Flint, "Task Force Smith and the 24th Division: Delay and Withdrawal, 5-19 July 1950, America's First Battles, 266-299.

²² Steven F. Rausch, "No More Task Force Smiths," Military Review 71 (November 1991), 1.

²³ Bolger, Americans at War, 388.

²⁴ Bolger, Americans at War and John M. Collins, America's Small Wars: Lessons for the Future (Washington, DC: Brassey's (US) Inc., 1991. Both authors offer a list of contingency operations in their texts.

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²⁵ Daniel P. Bolger, "The Ghosts of Omdurman," Parameters 21 (Autumn 1991), 28-39; and James M. Dubik, "Identifying Some 'Non-lessons' of the Gulf War," Army 41 (September 1991), 8-10.

²⁶ Paul Tiberi et al., 8.

²⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 170-174.

²⁸ US Army, Center for Army Lessons Learned, Operation Just Cause Lessons Learned, Volume II, Operations (Ft Leavenworth, Ks: US Army Combined Arms Command, 1990) p. II-16.

²⁹ Robert G. Boyko, "Just Cause MOUT Lessons Learned," Infantry 81 (May-June 1991): 30-32 and Clarence E. Briggs, Operation Just Cause-A Soldier's Eyewitness Account (Harrisburg, Pa: Stackpole Books, 1990).

³⁰ Operation Just Cause Lessons Learned, Volume II, II-16.

³¹ Robert G. Boyko, 28.

³² Operation Just Cause Lessons Learned, Volume II, II-14.

³³ FM 100-5, 17.

³⁴ Robert G. Boyko, 30.

³⁵ Edward N. Luttwak, "Just Cause-A Military Score Sheet," Washington Post, 31 December 1989: C4. There is a significant amount of disagreement concerning collateral damage and the number of Panamanian casualties that occurred during Operation JUST CAUSE. The intent to minimize unnecessary damage was clearly stated in the orders of all units engaged in the operation. (See the section of this monograph concerning rules of engagement.)

³⁶ Report of the Secretary of Defense to the President and the Congress, 17.

³⁷ FM 100-5, 170.

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- ³⁸ Operation JUST CAUSE Lessons Learned, Volume II, II-3.
- ³⁹ Kevin J. Hammond and Frank Sherman, "Sheridans in Panama," Armor 99 (March-April 1990): 13.
- ⁴⁰ Daniel P. Bolger, Special Operations in the Grenada Campaign," Parameters 43 (December 1988): 59-60.
- ⁴¹ US Army, Armor 2000-A Balanced Force for the Army of the Future (Fort Knox, Kentucky: US Army Armor School, 10 July 1990), 9.
- ⁴² Joseph E. DeFrancisco and Robert J. Reese, "Nimrod Dancer Artillery: Fire Support in Low-Intensity Conflict," Field Artillery (April 1990): 20.
- ⁴³ Robert G. Boyko, 32.
- ⁴⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-07, "Doctrine for Joint Operations in Low Intensity Conflict," Test Pub, (Washington, DC: Joint Doctrine and Allied Interoperability Division, Operational Plans and Interoperability Directorate, (J-7), October 1990), p.I-11.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., p. I-13.
- ⁴⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff. Joint Pub 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1 December 1989), 317.
- ⁴⁷ Discussion with Dr. Lawrence Yates, Professor, Combat Studies Institute and Army Historian Operation JUST CAUSE, Ft Leavenworth, Ks, 18 November 1991.
- ⁴⁸ Robert G. Boyko, 30-31.
- ⁴⁹ Clarence E. Briggs, 4.
- ⁵⁰ Discussion with Dr. Lawrence Yates, 18 November 1991.
- ⁵¹ Lawrence A. Yates, "Joint Task Force Panama: Just Cause-Before and After," Military Review 71 (October 1991): 68.

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⁵²Robert G. Boyko, 32.

⁵³A Soldier's Eyewitness Account, 141.

⁵⁴Lawrence A. Yates, 68.

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